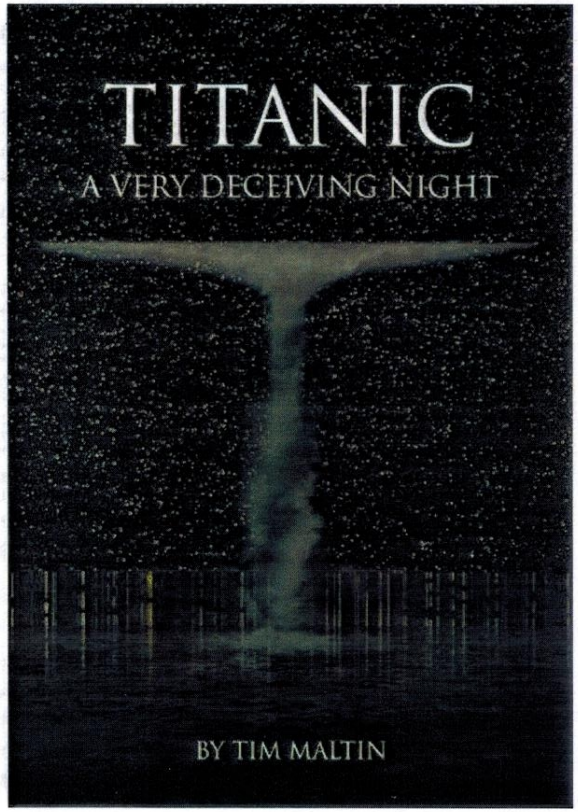

Revealing the true cause of the Titanic tragedy

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A Very Deceiving Night

By Tim Maltin

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to Lawrence Beesley and to Charlotte, Anna and Aubrey

Preface

'A Very Deceiving Night' began long before I started work on my previous book '101 Things You Thought You Knew About The Titanic...But Didn't', but it required such an immense amount of original historical and scientific research that the latter quickly overtook it in getting into print.

What began as a full investigation into why a nearby ship did not come to Titanic's rescue, ended up revealing why the Titanic hit an iceberg in the first place.

I'm delighted that, after 100 years, the further evidence that Titanic survivor Lawrence Beesley was waiting for so patiently is finally here, but I regret that there are no survivors now living who could have benefitted from the closure that this book provides. Perhaps the descendents of those who died on, or survived, the Titanic will now find the peace of mind which comes from a better understanding of the fate of their forebears.

This journey is an amazing one and I hope you enjoy following it as much as I did: The truth is always stranger than any fiction could ever make it, and our universe is truly wondrous.

Tim Maltin, 14th March 2012

Acknowledgements

I am indebted to a huge number of people who have helped me with this book. In particular, they include atmospheric refraction expert, Dr. Andrew T. Young, from San Diego State University, who patiently taught me about the various phenomena and helped me with the final text; Eric Freeman, Scott Stephens and Scott Woodruff from the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Climatic Data Centre; Boundary Layer Meteorologist Edgar Andreas from Northwest Research Associates; Wolfgang Gloeden from Deutscher Wetterdienst Climate Data Centre, Germany; Glyn Hughes and Kate Strachan from the National Meteorological Archive, Exeter and Graham Bartlett from the National Meteorological Library; The Nova Scotia Archives Museum, Malcolm Walker, Resident Meteorologist at The Royal Meteorological Society, Reading; Glenn Morris, Winnipeg Public Library; Dr Phil Anderson from the British Antarctic Survey; Don Murphy, Chief Oceanographer of the International Ice Patrol; Stuart Burrage from Airborne TV, without whom this project would never have come to light; Bedlam Productions, Nigel Levy and Karen Kirk for making it into a great documentary; National Geographic Channels International and Smithsonian Channel; fellow kayaker Nelson Pilgrim and fellow adventurer Paul Alcock, whose first-hand experiences of mirages in the Labrador Current were very helpful in illuminating survivor testimony; fellow Titanic experts Sam Halpern and George Behe, who both helped a great deal in bringing this book to completion: all Titanic experts are indebted to Sam Halpern for his pioneering work on the navigational aspects of the Titanic disaster and important discoveries leading from that; and George Behe's book, *On Board RMS Titanic*, is the best I've read on the subject; mirage photographers Ed Darack, Mila Zinkova and Pekka Parviainen – and all the others who've allowed me to

reproduce their wonderful photographs in this book and who are credited below; Simon Petherick, Nick Staunton, Lauren Alexander, Colette Smith, Sara Girolamo, John and Ellen Nielsen, Michael Maltin, and James Maltin have all contributed to this book and, last but not least, my patient and beautiful wife, Charlotte, who many times – I know – has felt like another, later victim of the Titanic. My apologies to those who have helped but who I have not mentioned here. My debt to you all is great. Thank you.

Introduction

100 years after the Titanic sank on 15th April 1912, the world is still fascinated by the story of how 1,500 people froze to death in the calm waters of the North Atlantic, on the maiden voyage of the largest and safest ship in the world. But the true cause of the Titanic disaster has never been revealed, until now. This book proves the presence of abnormal refraction – or mirage – at Titanic's crash site and reveals its previously unseen but crucial role, shedding new light on the tragedy.

The enduring nature of the story of the Titanic lies in its power as a metaphor for the human condition: she represented the best that the science of man could achieve and carried with her the confidence and hope of her age, but she was destroyed on her maiden voyage by the humbling power of nature, perfectly represented by an

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Reviews:

"Tim Maltin has shown that there was a strong superior-mirage display in the ice-field where Titanic sank, using both archival weather records and the logs of numerous ships in the area. The mirage and related refraction phenomena, such as looming, contributed to the confusion at the time of the accident. In particular, he has established that the crews of the Titanic and Californian saw each other's signals, but were unable to interpret them because of atmospheric effects acting in the unexpectedly large distance between the two ships."

Dr Andrew T. Young – Atmospheric refraction expert, San Diego State University

"Defenders of Captain Stanley Lord have long tried to rewrite the history books by claiming that Lord's vessel, the Californian, was well beyond visual range of the sinking Titanic on the night of April 14/15, 1912. Tim Maltin's groundbreaking research goes a long way toward explaining why these revisionist claims are untrue and why peculiar atmospheric conditions led the Californian's crewmen to mistakenly believe that the rocket-firing ship they were observing that night could not have been the Titanic. The author goes on to reveal the true nature of the "haze" that was reported by the Titanic's lookouts shortly before the appearance of the fatal iceberg, and he also explains how the night's peculiar atmospheric conditions created a "miraging zone" that tended to camouflage any obstacles that lay in the ship's path. Starting from a completely fresh perspective and utilizing brand new sources of information, Tim Maltin has added crucial missing pieces to key puzzles surrounding the Titanic saga, and researchers everywhere should be grateful for his outstanding contributions to the subject."

George Behe, author of *On Board RMS Titanic*, Vice President, Titanic Historical Society *1992-96*

"For once there is a book that dares to delve into the question of unusual atmospheric conditions contributing to some of the strange and conflicting sightings that took place the night Titanic sank. In this book Tim Maltin presents a strong case that there was an atmospheric inversion over the area of the wreck which led to the formation of superior mirages and looming that was not readily apparent to those who were there at the time. The case for this is backed by hard data taken from ship's logs and meteorological observation forms which Tim has tracked down. Questions as to why was haze seen by Titanic lookouts and not by others, why lights of vessels appeared closer than they actually were, why some reported seeing two masthead lights while others said they saw but one, are but a few of the topics addressed. If nothing else, this book will cause the reader to rethink some of what people had claimed they saw that fateful night; observations that may have led to confusion and inaction. This book is a must read for any Titanic enthusiast."

Sam Halpern, *Titanic* researcher and author

"Tim Maltin has pieced together an incredible jigsaw puzzle. I found it truly fascinating and felt compelled to get this unique story of the Titanic tragedy onto television screens for all to enjoy. In these technologically obsessive times it's reassuring to know that Mother Nature is ultimately pulling the strings, and we can all benefit from remembering this truth."

Stuart Burrage, AIRBORNE TV & FILM